

*CDQ in Action***Consumer Feedback Improves Clinic Services, Increases Paying Clients**

The willingness of consumers to pay for family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) services can be related to the perceived quality of those services. Developing mechanisms for consumers to provide regular feedback on service quality is a key component of PRIME II's Consumer-Driven Quality (CDQ) approach. In the Dominican Republic, PRIME is using CDQ to improve the organization and delivery of services at *Centro Diagnostico*, a reproductive health clinic operated by ADOPLAFAM, a nongovernmental family planning organization. Ensuring client satisfaction with the quality of services is an essential element of a strategy to build the clinic's financial sustainability by increasing the number of paying clients. In direct response to consumer input, significant improvements to the clinic's environment and services are already in place.

*Centro Diagnostico staff**Clinic director, Dr. Jose Gregorio Aponte*

Opened in October 2001, *Centro Diagnostico* serves low-income residents on the outskirts of the capital city, Santo Domingo. To introduce community leaders to the clinic and the CDQ concept, PRIME II helped organize five initial meetings. A series of six participatory group activities, adapted from PRIME partner EngenderHealth's Community COPE methodology, were then held in the neighborhoods surrounding the clinic to collect consumer feedback about FP/RH needs and perceived barriers to accessing services. Participants identified community spokespersons who would continue to dialogue with clinic staff. Another series of meetings followed, bringing community members together with clinic staff to clarify roles. Through the spokespersons, consumer expectations and experiences with services at *Centro Diagnostico* are now shared with clinic staff on an ongoing basis. In addition, PRIME is training community health promoters to conduct interviews about clinic services using a CDQ toolkit.

Implementation of an action plan generated in response to consumer input gathered during CDQ activities has resulted in a number of positive changes at *Centro Diagnostico*:

- A generator has been purchased to ensure electricity for cold storage of vaccines, which are dispensed free of charge
- Two additional gynecologists, including a female, have been added to the staff, along with a cardiologist and two psychologists

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Children now receive free vaccinations at the clinic

- A ceiling has been completed and curtains installed to ensure privacy in examining rooms
- A television and VCR showing educational videos have been set up in the waiting room.

As the clinic demonstrates its responsiveness to consumer needs, wants and preferences, ADOPLAFAM administrators hope to attract clients who are willing to pay full fees for services as well as to serve clients without the means to pay. Financial sustainability is especially important as one of ADOPLAFAM's major donors, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Dominican Republic, reduces overall population funding in the country. ADOPLAFAM set a goal of having 70% of the clinic's clients pay full fees. Coupons for free services were made available, however, to get *Centro Diagnostico* off the ground, and only 28% of clients were paying for services as of December 2001. Exceeding expectations, the number of clients attending the clinic more than doubled between the first and second trimesters of 2002; by August, 83% of clients were paying for services. Clinic income increased from 22,646 pesos in January 2002 to 43,209 pesos in August 2002. These gains hold great promise that *Centro Diagnostico* can remain financially self-sufficient while delivering quality FP/RH services that are accessible to all community members in the neighborhoods it serves.



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